

## Growing Up In Duxbury 75 Years Ago

By RUTH KRUEGER (MERRY)

During spring break, I visited my aunt at her house one afternoon, sitting comfortably opposite her at the kitchen table, I asked her if she would tell me some of the things she remembered best about her childhood. Without much hesitation, she began describing some situations she had experienced living in the small coastal community of Duxbury, as a member of a farming family with a meat marketing business on the side. Much of what she told was of special interest to me because I am a Duxburyite myself. She began by telling me about the family meat business.

"My father would have the meat come in on the train from Boston wrapped in burlap, with a keg of ale, which was for the customers who came in to pay their bills. The meat business also attracted rats. On Sunday mornings we'd block up the rat holes down in the cellar and chase them with whips to try and kill them. My father made his own corned beef. When he changed the brine he used to dump it out in the yard and we would eat the chunks of salt as if they were candy. We thought it was delicious."

She chuckled as I grimaced unconvinced and she said "Well, it didn't kill me!"

"I remember I hated the old butter churn, I thought my arm would drop off. There was a well in the barn; my mother kept everything down in it because there were no refrigerators then. I used to turn the crank on the bread mixer too; my stepmother made 8 loaves every other day. I used to hide my crusts under the ledge of the table. I hated those hard chunks of bread. I always said I didn't like hard crusts, and when I got married I wasn't going to have any, which I don't."

"My father moved his in-laws in with us. Sometimes there were 15 at the table; my father was always having hired men working there. We had great fights; my brother and sisters were always scrapping about something. My father would whip the boys occasionally, he never touched us girls, but he'd yell and we'd jump because we were so scared. His word was law and he was the boss. We had to be in bed by 9 at night and up at 5:30 in the morning; we used to enjoy sleeping in the old feather bed at my aunt's home in Hanson."

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"We had a lot of work to do, and we had to work hard. We had all of our chores, which I think today's children don't have to do. If we could get out of doing a job, we did. We used to hear my father coming up the hill; the clomping of the horse's feet always gave him away. Everyone would be playing and having a good time, but when they heard the horse they'd quickly disappear, because my father would put everybody to work. He was a great one for that. He could always find something for everyone to do."

"We enjoyed driving the horses. We had one horse who, once she came to the beginning of our long driveway, would zoom along home as fast as she could. We used to drive our horses down to the gunning stands, which were all along the beach for miles. Every Sunday morning we'd have to deliver papers and groceries to the duck hunters there. One time the men invited us in for hot chocolate, the horse took off, leaving us to walk 6 miles home in the bitter cold."

"We always had a lot of animals around. One time I thought I was too old to bother with the animals I was told to chase some of our pigs. I was in high school then and I was embarrassed; I didn't want any of my friends to see me chasing pigs. We also had chickens. One time my sister made mud pies with the eggs my hen was going to hatch in 2 days; she had the blood and the mud all mixed up. I remember crying my eyes out over that."

"I worked in the tea house every summer, and I used to take care of children after school. A year after my father remarried I lived with a teacher for 2 years in high school and took care of her children after school. I thought I was rich for earning \$2 a week for babysitting."

"In elementary school, the teacher was a chubby woman. She used to sit in her chair and tap on the window with her ring for us to come in. She'd always have a box of chocolates. She used to feed them to me. She had what she called 'sugar tits' at the desk too. If anybody acted like a baby, they were supposed to suck on one of those. She also had a box of rulers on the desk, and when she wanted anyone to behave she'd reach for the rulers and rattle them ominously. She used to put apples on the stove to make it smell nice; it was an old iron wood-burning stove with a pipe that went the whole length of the room."

"We had the regular games that children played; Puss

in the Corner, Prison Bar, and Blind Man's Buff. We had birthday parties too. We even used to collect gypsy moths and get a prize. I asked her what kind of a prize she thought a child would win for collecting gypsy moths today. She chuckled over the idea.

"We were sure of this teacher and that one were having love affairs. Whether they were or not, we imagined it. It made life more interesting."

"We had a lot of fun in high school. We did things but we didn't do damage to anything, no vandalism. One time we had a Halloween party at school. Some high school girls and I got over into the cemetery, and we took out a little casket (I hid behind a tree, I was so scared). I thought bones were white, but they're not, they are green! There were bats in there too; one of the girls put a bat on a gravestone, found a big plank and squashed the bat!"

"We used to enjoy picking mayflowers. On Memorial Days we always picked flowers to throw over the bridge in memory of the soldiers. We used to have a parade then too. I told her that I used to march in the Memorial day parades as a girl scout a few years back myself."

"On Independence Days my father used to use rolls and rolls of bunting to decorate the wagons."

"In the winter we went sliding on the salt water ice where at low tide we could slide down without any problem. One time one of us fell in an eel hole backwards and got wet up to the waist. We tried to dry him out right there because we didn't want anyone to know he'd almost been drowned. Finally we took him to my house because he could have his clothes dried and my mother wouldn't say much to get us in trouble."

"Everyone in the family has had an accident one way or another. I hit my sister over the head with a bottle and cut her head; we've been fighting every since, it seems to me. My brother got caught in the spokes of the wagon wheel when the horse stopped to get a drink of water. I remember we had a job of getting him out. One of my other sisters drank hydrochloric acid out of the bottle and burned a hole in her throat, and all down her coat. The hired man that brought her into the house had a burn on his thumb where she threw some of it up. It was what they used in fire extinguishers (my father was fire chief and forest warden for a while); she went into the harness room and helped herself. Somebody told my sister to dig some potatoes for supper. They used a pitchfork and one must have slipped and hit the other in the eye. One time our horse was afraid of the hurdy-gurdy, so my father used the whip to try and calm him, but the horse kicked me and broke my leg." At that point, she got up to show me a miniature hurdy-gurdy she had found at a flea market.

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When she had returned, she also had what she called a "sizzle pan" for me to give to my mother. She began explaining the various methods one could use while cooking different things, which signalled the end of our interview.

When I returned home, I played the tape back for my family, and all enjoyed hearing the conversation. It was very informative, educational, and marvelously entertaining. Not only did we glean a bit of family history, but we also had some fun listening together as a family.

## Pearl Harbor Day

By BOBBIE CUTLER

(The following is reprinted from the Dec. 18, 1980 edition of the Duxbury Clipper -- A little late but...Bobbie remembers...Ed.)

Sunday, Dec. 7, was Pearl Harbor Day. How many times Pearl Harbor Day has come on a Sunday, I don't know. Perhaps most of you remember it only as something you have read about in a history book. Others, older, will remember it vividly. They will remember just what they were doing. When great events happen -- that is great in changing the course of history -- most of you remember where you were and just what you were doing. You remember that bleak November day when President Kennedy was shot, you remember when Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King were shot.

Unless you are older, you may not remember when the Archduke Sarajevo of Austria was shot and if you do remember you probably didn't pay much attention to it. People get shot every day in some far away country. But that shot sparked the beginning of WWII, that war to end all wars...Today, with nuclear weapons available to most countries, the mere shooting of some important person would not mean war. But WWII was to end in death, destruction and a new map of Europe. As long as men are living, there will be wars. Perhaps if women were ruling the world, wars would be a thing of the past?

On Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941, what were you doing? Many of you were not born. I was and at the age of 23, living in Hanover, NH with my Dartmouth-instructor husband. We had a tiny rented house on Woodrow Court, which I thought was luxurious. It had a living room with fireplace, a sunroom, dining room and kitchen. Upstairs were 2 fair-sized bedrooms, plus one smaller one and a bath. When my maiden aunt came to visit, she complained that John took so long in the bathroom when she wanted to brush her teeth. So she had to take a glass of water out the back door to brush her teeth. The

furnace, of course, burned coal, and John would struggle with it every morning, shaking out the ashes and putting on more coal. Sometimes if the fire had gone out during the night, I would hear him cursing as he rebuilt a new fire before rushing off to class. Then he would take off in our aged Ford convertible which I had bought earlier from Walter Prince. It had been my first car, and how I loved it. Streaming along with the top down, I thought I had it all. I brought it to our marriage -- a fine dowry, I thought. When John left, I would sweep the dust under the beds or the rug, do the dishes and stroll, past the stadium up to the coffee shop at the Hanover Inn to meet John for coffee and a muffin. Other instructors or professors would join for a pleasant morning break. Then John would go back to his office or class in Dartmouth Hall and I would perhaps shop on the way back to Woodrow Court.

On Dec. 7, we were invited to lunch and bridge at the Thieraults, one of the few young couples in Hanover. Bridge was one of the few entertainments during those long sub-zero winter months. Evenings were spent over bridge, coffee and dessert. The Thieraults lived over the river in the pretty little town of Norwich in what was called "the Linoleum house." Every floor was covered with hideous linoleum. But on the low salaries paid at Dartmouth (John got \$2,200 a year), poor instructors took what they could find in the way of rentals.

We were sitting at the bridge table -- I won't say I had just made a grand slam, doubled and redoubled, because I hadn't. The phone rang. "Pearl Harbor has been bombed. Turn on your radio." We did. There was no more bridge that day nor in the days to come. We did not realize that WWII was about to begin. We knew that over 2000 had been killed by the Japanese and that our Pacific Fleet had been reduced to rubble. Later we listened to President Roosevelt's famous speech about "The Day of Infamy."

In the weeks to follow, John became increasingly nervous. He had been only a PFC as a Selectee in the Army, as he was drafted No. 1 in New Hampshire and the Army was reaching out to get him back. But he, after much negotiating, joined the Navy, as a Lt. (jg). It was time to leave Hanover.

We packed our things, putting furniture into storage, thinking we would be back some day. I always thought my days would be spent in that beautiful mountain town. Having been brought up in the academic atmosphere of Ithaca, where my father was a Cornell professor, I loved Dartmouth. But that was not to be. The Lord works in mysterious ways. Perhaps that is why He brought us to Duxbury to start the Duxbury Clipper over 30 years ago.

Schonlands Honor

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## Schonlands Honor 50th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor



(L-r): Avery Schonland, Heidi Schonland, Charles MacGillivray, past president of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, lay a memorial wreath at the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial in Boston, to 2,403 American servicemen killed in the attack of Pearl Harbor.

With flags lowered to half mast and bells tolling at exactly 1:55 pm, New England remembered the 50th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor. Special ceremonies were held at the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center in Boston. Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Charles MacGillivray of Braintree addressed the members of the Pearl Harbor survivors. A wreath was laid in memory of the 2,403 American servicemen killed in action.

Mr. MacGillivray, past president of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, was with his granddaughters, Thayer Academy students Avery and Heidi Schonland of Duxbury.

The girls' paternal grandparents, the late Rear Admiral H.E. Schonland and Mrs. Schonland were at Pearl Harbor the morning of the attack. The late Rear Admiral Schonland was also a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Mrs. Schonland, widow of the late Admiral, spoke to the Retired Officers Assn. of New London about her infamous Sunday morning of Dec. 7, 1941.